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Pakistani print media coverage of environmental issues: a comparative study of Urdu and English newspapers

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PAKISTANI PRINT MEDIA COVERAGE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF URDU AND ENGLISH NEWSPAPERSAbdur Rauf¹, Dr. Sajjad Ali² (Corresponding Author), Muhammad Irfan³**Original Article**

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Abstract

Newspaper is the powerful mass media which has played a leading role in the dissemination of knowledge and in building global awareness of different problems in particular in prevalent environmental issues. The purpose of this research is to examine the environmental crisis coverage in both Pakistan's Urdu and English press. It also seeks to examine the role and purpose of the newspaper in environmental awareness. For this analysis, the researchers have examined the content of the two national newspapers: the English (Dawn) and Urdu (Aaj) newspapers. Based on the study findings, it has been confirmed that the government and the general public accept the importance of the issue, if the media set the agenda for a matter. In this respect, the results of the study showed that the media did not develop an appropriate agenda for environmental problems in the country.

Keywords: Print media coverage, environmental issues, comparative study, Urdu & English Newspapers

Introduction

For the happy and prosperous survival of all living organism a well and net environment for all kind of free destructive pollution is must. Unless and until the free pollution environment is not provided, the existence of standard life on the Earth would undoubtedly be impossible for living being. Therefore, environmental issues have become so sensitive and vital in the news media. So, in addition to the sensitivity and importance of environmental issues media specially newspaper is playing central role in keeping and making people cognizant and inform about environmental issues and for taking actions to minimize these issues (Dalelo, 2007).

Like other scientific and natural issues press also give coverage to environmental issue which is the big problem in Pakistan and

the universe at whole, for the aim to keep the public aware and inform about these problems. Newspaper is the most effective print media in the world since long played and still playing important role in the information process and is still considered effective by literate segment. Press like other media of communication provide information to the public to educate them, create knowledge and keep them entertains. Press is considered the most effective medium of communication, which has the significant effect on the readers. Press on environmental issues provides information to the reader to overcome on these issues face by living beings.

With regard to environmental policy, Press has a central role to play especially in promoting environmental awareness and

education. Media such as newspapers, radio, TV and the internet, has a vital role in this regard, but Press also explain the environmental policies, regulations and plans to the public, and to solve a specific environmental issue (Tengbers, 1995).

But the matter here is concerned that in Pakistan English dailies are given more space and focus to such issues as compare to Urdu dailies. Pakistan is developing country and that is the hub of Environmental issue that has badly affected the atmosphere of the country and survival of the people.

Environmental issues are increasing by large numbers that has caused many effects on our lives, different health related issues have been given birth and agriculture has been highly distorted. As newspapers are considered the ears and eyes of the society that shows the society and keep them aware of all problems and issues that are hazardous and damageful for the concerned society. Increasing in environmental issues become national, regional as well as international problem, that have attracted the attention of media policy makers particularly print media to aware the public about these issues by giving more coverage to these issues (Asian Development Bank, 2000).

Newspaper is an effective mass media and is the only oldest medium that has played and plays dominant role in sending of information and create awareness amongst the public globally on various issues particularly in environmental issues that are prevailing. Now due to globalization and rapid technological advancement such as social media face book, twitter etc, the press has become less effective as compared to other medium such as TV and Radio etc. it is also claimed that newspaper is the medium for the only literate segment and urban societies, where as its access to rural is not possible and for an illiterate ordinary man is difficult to read and understand it.

The need of awareness regarding environmental problems the newspapers

owner and government has launched various campaign through press to inform and educate the people about its destruction and about its control and prevention. It can be said that communication programs regarding environmental issues through press growing up day by day and necessary amendments and changes are made in the strategy to somehow overcome on the issues. The need arise to keep the public cognizant about the major environmental issues which has highly affected human life. It can be said that increase in environmental issues and problem is due to our ignorance and that of government inability and media policy makers and other concerned quarters taken place. To control environmental issues the media such as press should give more coverage and frequently highlight to tackle these issues by taking major preventive steps.

Environment

According to (Ruth, 1975), there are different types of environments which have been classified into; Biotic, A biotic and cultures, while, these have been further categorized into; Deserts, Forests, Urban areas, Polar areas, Wetlands, Oceans and grasslands. These environments can exist in a same area, or may exist in different parts of the world.

An environment is composed of the animals, plants and other living organisms that make up a certain area. Environments are also referred to as ecosystems, and the two terms can be used interchangeably. Different environments have different soils, climates and water systems that make up the majority of the earth in that environment. The environment can be affected by the amount of daylight in the area. Environments of areas are constantly changing and can be greatly impacted by physical and chemical changes within the earth. For example, an urban environment is less likely to be affected by higher pollution than a forest environment is

because an urban environment is accustomed to pollution.

There are two main categories that environments are divided into. The physical and biological environments are different because the physical environment focuses on the earth, the water and the atmosphere around the environment; a biological environment focuses around the living things that make up the environment. Environments that are physical as well as environmental can be drastically different while in the same proximity.

Environment in Pakistan

There are different aspects of environment of Pakistan such as: Biota (The plant and animal life of a particular area), Water, Climate, Geography, Pollution and Climate change. Flora means the plants of a particular area and fauna means animals of a particular area. The difference in the landscapes and climates of Pakistan allows it to flourish a variety of plants and trees. There are different types of forests which range from coniferous alpine and subalpine trees such as pine, spruce and deodar cedar in the extreme northern mountains, through deciduous trees in most parts of the country, to palms such as date and coconut in southern Punjab, southern Baluchistan and all of Sand. In the Western hills there are juniper, tamarisk, coarse grasses and scrub plants. And on the coastal wetlands along the coast lies the Mangrove forests.

Like plants Fauna of Pakistan also reflects the changing climate. According to Wikipedia around 668 bird species are found here. Some of the birds that commonly are found here are falcons, hawks, eagles, crows, mynas and sparrows. Western Tragopans are significantly found at Kohistan and Palas. Many other birds seen in Pakistan are migratory, which come from Europe, Central Asia and India. In the southern plain's

mongooses, civets, hares, the Asiatic jackal, the Indian pangolin, the jungle cat and the desert cat are found. The animals that are common in the surrounding areas are mugger crocodiles in the Indus, wild boar, deer, porcupines and small rodents. In the sandy scrublands of Pakistan Asiatic jackals, striped hyenas, leopards and wildcats are found. A small number of Nilgai are found along the Pakistan-India border and in some parts of Cholistan. A wide variety of animals live in the mountainous north, including the Marco Polo sheep, the urial (a subspecies of wild sheep), Markhor and Ibex goats, the Asian black bear and the Himalayan brown bear. Among the rare animals found in the area are the snow leopard, the Asiatic cheetah and the blind Indus river dolphin, of which there are believed to be about 1,100 remaining, protected at the Indus River Dolphin Reserve in Sindh. In total, 174 mammals, 177 reptiles, 22 amphibians, 198 freshwater fish species and 5,000 species of invertebrates (including insects) have been recorded in Pakistan.

The flora and fauna of Pakistan suffer from a number of problems. Pakistan has the second-highest rate of deforestation in the world. This, along with hunting and pollution, is causing adverse effects on the ecosystem. The government has established a large number of protected areas, wildlife sanctuaries, and game reserves to deal with these issues.

Significance of the study

Environment issues have increased after the half of 20th century when industrial revolutions come into function. That has caused different pollution on environment that is now a hazardous issue. The aim of this research study is to comparatively analyze the coverage of environmental issue in the Urdu and English press of Pakistan. It is also aimed at to evaluate the role and function of newspaper in awareness regarding environmental issues. To evaluate importance

of environmental issues in newspaper wither they covered these issues more on front page and or in back page. To what extent they are treated with environmental issues. What environmental issues they are mostly covered in the newspaper. To sum up the main objectives of the research study is given below:

Objectives of the Study

- To evaluate the role of the press in creating awareness regarding environmental issues.
- To analyze the role of press in creating awareness regarding protection of environmental issues.
- To search out the coverage of environmental issues in the press.
- To find out that how much space is given by each of the selected newspaper to environmental issues.
- To compare the coverage of daily Dawn and daily Aaj newspaper regarding environmental issues.
- To find out the coverage of press toward the kind of environment issues.

Research questions:

- Does English newspaper give more coverage to environmental issues than Urdu newspaper?
- Does Urdu newspaper play a positive role in creating awareness regarding environmental issues in Pakistan?
- Does government more working for the protection of environment as compared to the non-government organization?

Literature Review

A literature review refers to already available and published material of other renowned scholars, researchers and writers. Literature review is already existing work which helps in the research process of the researcher to explore his study, so the researcher of this study he wants to conducted

had studied various existed literature review which are as follow (Creswell, 2013).

In developed countries and urban areas, the use of print, broadcast, and Internet media can be a great way to increase education and awareness. By working with the media, government agencies and nonprofit organizations can help spread their message, either by holding press briefings, issuing printed press releases, or even setting up online databases that can be used as information centers. Information centers can be useful tools to educate both the public and journalists about environmental concerns. Many media outlets may want to increase their coverage of environmental issues, but don't know where to find accurate information. Having a central information clearinghouse that is accessible to journalists and the public can be extremely useful. ("Ways to Increase Public Awareness About Environmental Problems by Brin Quick") (3) The print Broadcast can be powerful ally in educating informing the public on environmental issues. Newspaper and other available media through ad and public campaign increase understanding about Environmental issues and is quickly reach out to large masses (UNEP, 2007).

A related paper related to the current study was founded by researcher that was published in 2013 and was about "Environmental Coverage in the Mainstream News" it was a comparative analysis of the coverage of environmental issues in news media and that of entertainment, and as well as crime coverage, it was founded that many of the news organizations were giving more coverage to crime and entertainment program than that of environmental program.

The study was showed that on average basis entertainment program in the mainstream newspaper was given more coverage that was over three times than environmental issues. Most of the newspaper was giving high priority to crime reporting as compared to environmental issues because of the local touch in crime reporting. Whereas as

local newspaper was given more coverage to environmental issues in the headlines as compare to national newspaper.

It was also found that an innovation and change was happened within the news organization on the basis of coverage of the issues in larger basis because the public desire and needs has stronger effect on the news media.

It was found in the paper that the coverage of environment issues had significant impact on public perception, policy makers, and on a society at a whole that had expand and deepen their stewardship ethic. It was a survey and was conducted in America, which found that nearly eighty percent people want improvement in the coverage of environmental issues in the news (An Inaugural ranking report, 2013).

Another study with title "The Coverage of Environmental Issues by the Greek Media from the Perspective of Editor" saying that the coverage of scientific issues in the newspapers was popular for many years than environmental issues in the past in the Greek news media, but although in the recent years, because of the frequently pressing of the environmental problems and issues lead to climate change, there is an increased interest on behalf of the news media.

The study has Shawn that various studies have attempted to unravel the relationship between the public agenda and that of media with regard to environmental issues on the basis that the media is a vital means of information for the people and has affect on their perception regarding the environment issues coverage. The study showed that about the coverage of environmental issues from 1960 to 1972 public interest in environmental issues was directly related to the quantity of coverage covered by news media outlets.

Undoubtedly media is playing significant role in the construction of environmental issues and especially in the recognition of the public related problems. The

same the journalists play equally important role that how environmental issues are perceived by the general public important in the media.

The study has found that environmental news was boring and was creating pessimism that was difficult for the general public to understand it. It was showed that environmental news was not having a large readership and that there was a deficit of journalistic knowledge and experience regarding environmental problems and issues to cover. The paper also found that majority of environmental journalists has admitted that there was low coverage of environmental issues in the Greek news media and there was simple coverage of such issues in the media (Kostarella, Theodosiadou, & Tsantopoulos, 2013).

Kapoor, (2011) in his study "Role of mass media in the environmental issues promotion along with the skill development among the rural public", saying that mass media is one of the basic source of information about environmental issues and playing pivotal role in the creating process about such harmful issues. Due to illiteracy in the rural people they were mostly preferred to listen to radio and watch television instead to read newspapers. They study concluded that different sources of mass media had been not utilized that was barrier and had affected the awareness level about environmental issues. The study stressed that there was urgent need of the effective communication channel to create the information and awareness regarding environmental issues that had harmed and effected agricultural economy of the area amongst the people because agriculture is the only milestone to the livelihood of rural people.

Another study, "media and environmental awareness" says that due to importance of environmental issues for living things the issue has become very sensitive in the news media universally (Roba, 2012). He said that media is playing fundamental role in creating of awareness regarding

environmental issues amongst the people and force the concerned quarter to take action against for the protection of such issues. He said that majority of the people in the world are become aware of the environment issues through international media. He further explored that due to environmental destruction, pollution and degradation such issues have drawn the attention of people so for to protect and control the issues. It is a global problem and action is required on world basis this is a serious issue and took place in well developed countries due to industrialization etc. The study found that poor information delivery and communication systems were the major challenges to the news media concerned to create the awareness effectively regarding environmental issues. Further it was concluded that media could played an important role in stimulating discussions on the environment issues. The researcher found in the study that lack of information and awareness regarding environmental issues, and cooperation of the concerned quarters of environment, ineffective delivery and communication system and lack of the skill and training about the environment issues in journalists were the major challenges for covering and reporting about on issues related to environment. The study further summed up that there was no permanent section for environment issues to cover and present it in the form of news in the newspaper.

Theoretical Framework

An agenda setting theory was originally developed by Dr. Mc Comb and Donald Shaw in 1972 both were the professors of journalism. As we live in the world where on daily basis different uncounted events happens simultaneously. The media which have and hired different employees in the form of reporters, correspondents, journalists, and editors etc, to cover these issues for the aim to keep the world in touch and to inform the people, to educate the people and also to entertain the people,

The media which aware us about the importance of the issues and events, that which one is significant and which one is not and also which one is less important, because we cannot see the situation and event that happen but this all is done by media. This is the media that keep us inform about the latest occurrences taking place in the world around to create the pictures of these events and occurrences in our mind. The media is to create secondhand reality in our mind because of our perception instead of reality because there is no confirmation and proved and guarantee of the pictures and event that inform us about. The media employees focus to cover the issues and events in the media that are more influential and significant issues of the day to masses. The shaping and framing functions of the media of the interesting issues and events are called agenda-setting function of Mass Media (McCombs, Reynolds, 2002)

Theory of agenda setting is perceived as an important theory of the media at present time, the idea of the theory took place when it was said that media is able to transfer the silence issue of the media into public debate or agenda. The media is able to decide and select what event of the day to cover and what to overlook and prevent. McCombs, Reynolds, (2002) said that 75 % of the possible news of the day media rejects to transmit it into the public by newspapers because of limited and insufficient space to print every event and issues. Because of the limited space the media filters the issues that pass-through media gate to the public on unequal basis, some of the news events are taken prominence and covered on larger length and frequently displayed and the other are highlighted on less importance basis and less prominent coverage are given.

The theory states that people get the importance and vital issue from the media that effect on them and then that issues transformed into their own agenda, that is the most pivotal function of the media. The idea of the agenda setting theory was presented by

Walter Lippmann's when he said that media create the picture of the world in our mind, although he had known that media create the second-hand reality of the world's events to just reflect it. He further said that media conceal and hidden the reality we just see the reflection of the events (Lippmann, 1922). Throughout in this study the researchers find out that there was a relationship among the media agenda and the public agenda. the purpose of the studies are to understand or looking to the media issues and determining whether these issues are important.

Research methodology

A research methodology refers to the method and techniques that are taken for conduction of research and performing of the research by the researcher. The method and process that is used by researcher at the time of research study for data collection and solution for the given and said topic issue, problem (Kothari, 2004).

For this study the researchers have adopted content analysis of the two national Newspapers namely the daily (Dawn) English news paper and the daily (Aaj) Urdu newspaper. The goal and aim of the study were to explore and analyze the coverage of two newspapers about the environmental issues in print media. This content analysis was selected to examine that how much the environmental issues had been covered by each of the said newspaper. Content analysis is a method use to systematically

describe written, spoken and visual communication (Berelson, 1952). A population is the aggregate or totality area or object of the study from which sampling for the study is taken by the researcher to make the conclusion from the data (Parahoo, 1997). The universe for this study was print media where a sample of two national dailies one the English and the Urdu was taken to comparatively analysis the coverage of environmental issues. Sampling is the subset of population that is taken from the population to collect the data, while a Purposive sampling is that which starts with a purpose in mind and people's object of interest are included in the study by researcher and exclude that all who he does not like and deem fit (Fink, 2003). The news stories in English newspaper daily Dawn and the Urdu newspaper daily Aaj were chosen through purposive sample to comparatively analyze the coverage of environmental problems in both the dailies from 1st January 2015 to 30th April 2015 the aim of the content analysis was to see that how each of the newspaper treated with such burning issues.

Data collection tool is a systematic method used to collect data through different ways and from different sources to get accurate data (Parahoo (1997). For this basic reason of comparative analysis of the two newspapers a coding sheet was developed that was consisted on placement of environmental issues more, and coverage of the issues in front and back pages.

Results and Findings

Table 1. Month wise comparison of the newspaper coverage regarding environmental issue

Variables	Dawn		Variables	Aaj	
	F	%		F	%
January	8	27.6	January	20	20.4
February	9	31.0	February	39	39.8
March	5	17.2	March	24	24.5
April	7	24.1	April	15	15.3
Total	29	100.0	Total	98	100.0

Table 1 demonstrates month wise comparison of the daily Dawn and daily Aaj that more coverage has been given on the month of February, in which daily Dawn covered the issue 31%, while AAJ 39.8% covered the environmental issues of the country in the month of February.

Table 2 Page wise comparison of the newspaper coverage regarding environmental issue

Variables	Dawn		Variables	Aaj	
	F	%		F	%
Front page	16	55.2	Front page	60	61.2
Back page	13	44.8	Back page	38	38.8
Total	29	100.0	Total	98	100.0

Page wise comparison of the daily Dawn and daily Aaj shows in the table 2 that both the newspaper covered the issue more on front page in which daily Dawn published 55.2% and Aaj 61.2% news stories on the issues of environment.

Table 3 Organizational wise comparison of the newspaper coverage regarding environmental issue

Variables	Dawn		Variables	Aaj	
	F	%		F	%
Government	10	34.5	Government	70	71.4
Non-Government	19	65.5	Non-government	28	28.6
Total	29	100.0	Total	98	100.0

The table 3 illustrates the organizational wise comparative coverage of the daily Dawn and daily Aaj that daily Dawn covered more news stories 65.5% regarding the environmental issue in the context of non-government and less coverage were given to government 34.5%, whereas, daily Aaj were covered more news 71.4% regarding the government context then non-government 28.6% about the environmental issues in the country.

Table 4 Quantity wise comparison of the newspaper coverage regarding environmental issue

Variables	Dawn		Variables	Aaj	
	F	%		F	%
1-2 columns	18	62.1	1-2 columns	34	34.7
3-4 columns	6	20.7	3-4 columns	61	62.2
Above	5	17.2	above	3	3.1
Total	29	100.0	Total	98	100.0

Regarding the quantity wise coverage to environmental issue table 4 shows that daily Dawn were given more coverage 62.1% one to two columns, while daily Aaj given more coverage 62.2% three to four columns.

Table 5 Comparison of the pictorial representation of the daily Dawn and Aaj regarding environmental issues in 2015

Variables	Dawn		Variables	Aaj	
	F	%		F	%
Yes	2	6.9	Yes	26	26.5
No	27	93.1	No	72	73.5
Total	29	100.0	Total	98	100.0

Table 5 demonstrates the comparison of the pictorial representation that daily Dawn published 6.9% stories with pictures, while daily Aaj 26.5% news stories with picture that highlighted the environmental issue in the country.

Table 6 Issue wise comparison of the daily Dawn and Aaj regarding environmental issues in 2015

Dawn				Aaj					
Nature	Variables	F	%	Nature	Variables	F	%		
Biotic	Cleaning campaign	9	31.03	Biotic	Cleaning campaign	31	31.6		
	Wildlife issues	1	3.40		Plantation	1	1.02		
A Biotic	Health issues	9	31.03	Deforestation	3	3.06			
	Water sanitation	2	6.80	Health issues	43	43.8			
	Rain storm	5	17.20	Water sanitation	4	4.08			
-	-	-	-	A Biotic	Rain storm	6	6.12		
				Water shortage	3	10.30	Plastic bags	8	8.16
				-	-	-	Water shortage	2	2.04
Total		29	100.0	Total		98	100.0		

Table 6 exemplify that Dawn has been less coverage (29+98=127), (29/127=23) 23%, while daily Aaj (98+29=127), (98/127=77) 77% to the environmental issues in 4 months of 2015. The table also shows that daily Dawn covered 4 biotic and 2 A biotic issues, while daily Aaj published 4 biotic and 3 A biotic issues in the respective months. The table also demonstrates that amongst the issue more coverage was given by both the newspaper to cleaning campaign and health issues.

Discussion

According to the Saeed (2014) cited BBC report that about 72% of the country residents don't have trust to the government to help them responding to the environmental issue in Pakistan. They have no confidence in the government taking action on issues of food, water, energy and extreme weather.

The results of the research about the question "Does English newspaper give more coverage to environmental issues than Urdu newspaper?" rejected the notion that English newspaper given more coverage as compare

to Urdu, but on the base of the results Urdu newspaper has been given more coverage to environmental issues than English newspaper. The questions "Does Urdu newspaper plays a positive role in creating awareness regarding environmental issues in Pakistan?" was supported by the findings that Urdu newspaper has played more positive role in creating awareness towards environmental issues as compare to English newspapers.

The outcomes of the study also rejected the notion of the questions "Does government more working for the protection of environment as compared to the non-

government organization?" that daily Dawn and daily Aaj that daily Dawn covered more news stories 65.5% regarding the environmental issue in the context of non-government and less coverage were given to government 34.5%, whereas, daily Aaj were covered more news 71.4% regarding the government context then non-government 28.6% about the environmental issues in the country.

"What types of environmental issues has been addressed?" the question presumption was explored that that Dawn has been less coverage (29+98=127), (29/127=23) 23%, while daily Aaj (98+29=127), (98/127=77) 77% to the environmental issues in 4 months of 2015. The table also shows that daily Dawn covered 4 biotic and 2 A biotic issues, while daily Aaj published 4 biotic and 3 A biotic issues in the respective months. The table also demonstrates that amongst the issue more coverage was given by both the newspaper to cleaning campaign and health issues.

The results of the study explored the questions supposition "What is the ratio of coverage on front and back page of the newspapers regarding environmental issue in Pakistan" that both the newspaper covered the issue more on front page in which daily Dawn published 55.2% and Aaj 61.2% news stories on the issues of environment.

On the basis of the results of the study it has been confirmed that if the media set an agenda for an issue, the government and the public also accept the worth and value of the said problem of the area. In this regard the findings of the study revealed that media didn't set an effective agenda for the creation and protection of the environmental issue in the country.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is concluded on the base of results that both the newspapers have been more covered the issues in the month of February, due to environmental changes in the country for that the press covered the issue more

interestedly. It is also summarized that both the newspapers were published more news stories on front page than back pages, which shows the environmental issue is most important issue of the country, so it has been covered on the front pages.

The results of the research also revealed that daily Dawn has been covered more news stories on the non-governmental organizations instead of government information, while daily Aaj news stories were based on the government viewpoint regarding the environmental issue as compare to non-governmental organizations, which shows that Aaj is more pro-government as compare to daily Dawn. The outcomes of the study also disclosed that daily Dawn has been given more space 1 to 2 columns, while daily Aaj has been spaced 3 to 4 columns, which is concluded that daily Aaj has been given more space than daily Dawn to the environmental issues. The study also explored that daily Dawn covered 4 biotic and 2 A biotic issues, while daily Aaj published 4 biotic and 3 A biotic issues in the respective months. It is concluded that amongst the issue more coverage was given by both the newspaper to cleaning campaign and health issues.

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